

Depot Town Rag

Volume 22, Number 5

July
2007

Not a tabloid;
some of these
celeb stories are
actually true!

100%
FREE
RAG
CONTENT



A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Lifestyles of the RICH & FAMOUS in Ypsilanti

From exploitation to heartfelt hospitality,
we continue to roll out the red carpet

Most famous entertainer recalled here this month

One of the largest ElvisFest concerts in North America is held in this district with a long tradition of hosting celebrities.

Not a contest, but a true concert with spectacular performances from the first act to the last act, Michigan ElvisFest features the best professional Elvis Tribute Artists in North America

The world-renowned Michigan ElvisFest began here in 2000. Beautiful Riverside Park is the place where Elvis fans flock by the thousands every July to pay homage to the King of Rock & Roll and to hear the most award-winning professional Elvis Tribute Artists in North America, as well as other talented Legend Tribute Artists.

Meals on Wheels is this year's featured charity

Please donate to this worthy charity. This family event includes Saturday ElvisFest ticket(s), all of the ElvisFest activities and a fantastic picnic featuring hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken and much more. All proceeds go to Meals on Wheels.



Friday-Saturday, July 13-14
www.mielvisfest.org



Cavalier de La Salle
**On the
Huron River:**

• An early big name to cruise the neighborhood was the French explorer René-Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle in 1679. After losing his ship, the Griffon, to mysterious circumstances on Lake Michigan, he crossed the swampy lower peninsula on foot. His crew built canoes and shoved through debris on the Huron River from today's village of Dexter, past Ypsilanti's Riverside Park, and to Belleville (French Landing).



Sooner or later, it seems everybody comes to Depot Town

Stand on the same street corner long enough, someone has said, and you will eventually see everybody you have ever known. Depot Town may be able to improve on that: Stand on the corner of Cross and River Streets long enough and you will see some of the most famous people in the history of the world.

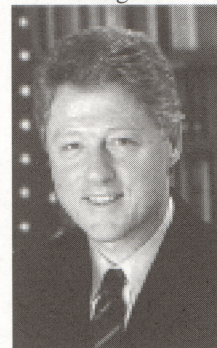
There have been no recent sightings of contemporary celebs like Tom Cruise or Britney Spears but, if you look a bit further, you will find a cast of genuine celebrities makes regular appearances here.

A Presidential parade:

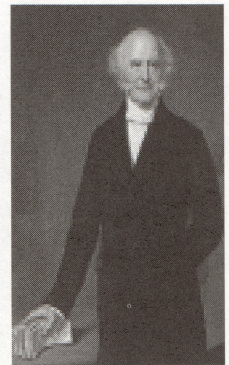
In November of 1825, U.S. President Martin Van Buren came from Detroit to visit his friend Andrew McKinstry. McKinstry had married Eliza Cross (Cross Street was named for her family) in Washtenaw County's first marriage.

Later on, U.S. President Bill Clinton stopped for lunch after speaking at EMU. He brought his own chef to help in Cady's kitchen and Secret Service posted sharpshooters on the rooftops.

President Richard Nixon's speech writer Pat Buchanan dropped in to see the antique Hudsons at Miller Motors when he was campaigning for the U.S. Presidency in 1992.



William J. Clinton



Martin Van Buren



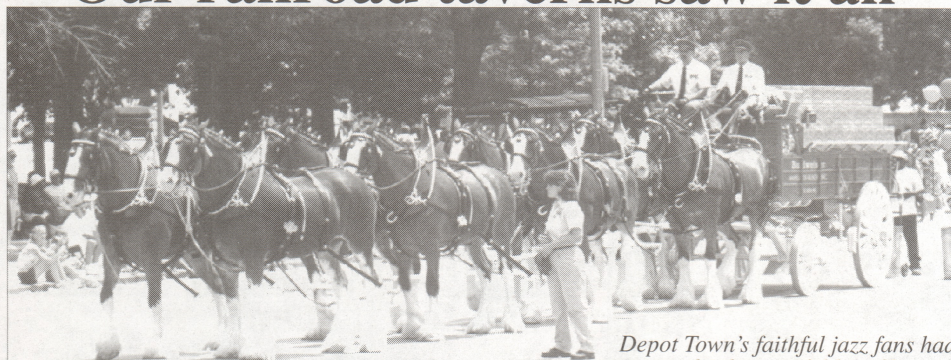
Lost in A²

"I think they dropped us off at the wrong station," says Harry S. Truman. This 1942 photo from the Truman Presidential Library shows Senator Truman and members of the Truman Committee standing on the boarding platform (track side) of the Michigan Central Railroad Depot in Ann Arbor (now the Gandy Dancer restaurant) notes historian Wystan Stevens.

The Truman Committee came to inspect wartime production at the Willow Run bomber plant, so they eventually got to Ypsilanti.

Truman was elected Vice President of the United States in 1944, and succeeded to the Presidency upon the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, in April, 1945.

Our railroad taverns saw it all



Depot Town's faithful jazz fans had to drink an awful lot of beer to convince the local distributor to bring the famed Anheuser-Busch Clydesdale team to town, but in 198? they unloaded their giant semi-trailers right in the middle of East Cross Street and paraded the famous hitch up and down the block for several hours

This Bad Guy didn't stop



Nationally notorious gangster John Dillinger came through Ypsilanti in the late 1920s and nobody was very happy about it. Tipped off

that he was coming to Detroit from the west via Ford Road, police set up road blocks all along the way. But Dillinger came right down Michigan Avenue and sailed through the downtown central business district.

Good Sports stayed longer

They didn't call them sports bars in the old days; they were just taverns and everybody talked about sports there. And, when the sports stars of the day were making appearances on local fields and stadiums, they flocked to Depot Town's taverns:

The Detroit Tigers hung out here: catcher Mickey Cochran and George Kell were regulars at the Alibi Bar.

The Detroit Lions played at the Normal School's Briggs Field and brought Les Bingaman, Charlie Ane, Alex Karas, Bobby Lane, and Leon Hart down to the district for frequent rounds of beer. Green Bay Packer Paul Hornung was a regular, as well.

The Detroit Red Wings showed off the Stanley Cup at Aubree's Saloon in a splashy event to thank their loyal locals.

An Ypsi shoe store had his shoes...for a while

Robert Pershing Wadlow, the 8'11.1" giant from Alton, Illinois never got to Ypsilanti;



but his shoes did. As a promotion for his scheduled appearance here, a pair of his size 37 shoes was exhibited in the window of Willoughby's Shoe Store. They cost \$100 a pair, but were provided free by the International Shoe Company.

While making an appearance on that tour in Manistee, Michigan in July 1940, a fatal infection set in when a blister formed on his sensitive foot. On July 4th, doctors had Wadlow confined to a hotel bed, unable to find suitable accommodations at the local hospital. Days later, after emergency surgery and blood transfusions, the infection lingered and his temperature continued to rise. At 1:30 a.m., on 15 July, Robert Wadlow passed away in his sleep. He never got to Ypsilanti.

Upon Wadlow's death in 1940, his family had almost all his belongings destroyed. The Willoughbys sent his shoes back to his family who did not want collectors to obtain his clothes or personal items to be displayed as 'freak' memorabilia.

A national home run 46 years old today

As a 12-year-old Ypsilanti student, Carolyn King was the first girl to break the gender barrier nationally in Little League baseball. She made history in the spring of 1973 when she beat out three boys to win a spot on the Ypsilanti Orioles. National Little League officials revoked the Ypsilanti chapter's charter, and the City of Ypsilanti retaliated with a sex-discrimination suit.

Ypsilanti Little League prevailed in federal court and received its charter back and King finished the season.

Dennis's Music is really "Music Row North"

Dennis Runyon's music shop at 27 E. Cross may be a tiny hometown enterprise, but its effect is far reaching in the music business. Runyon's band, @Random, has fronted for many stellar attractions in the world of music over the years. Runyon tells of @Random being the warm-up band for Alice Cooper when he appeared at Abigail's in 1972 (A&P, Bimbo's, Abigails, now Marsh Plating).



Cooper

In '72 Dennis's band opened for Molly Hatchet with Black Oak Arkansas ("Jim Dandy to the Rescue") at EMU's Bowen Field House.



Hatchet

Runyon and @Random also fronted for Mitch Ryder in '71 and Rick Derringer in '74 at the Suds Factory now a warehouse and storage facility just behind Depot Town on Huron River Drive.



Ryder



Kimberly RICE
DDS, PLC
FAMILY DENTISTRY
♡♡♡
529 N. Hewitt Road
734-434-3820



concepts • designs • screenprinting • ad specialties

Diane C. Brown
236 Kirkley Dr., Brooklyn, MI • (517)592-8708
e-mail: dianebrownadart@aol.com • FAX: (517) 592-3585

www.depottown.org



rated by GQ Magazine -
Top best Burger
in the country

Reserve FRENCHIE'S
for your next meeting

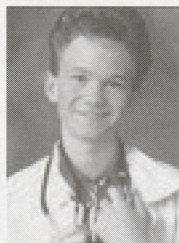
56 E. Cross Street 734.483.1035

Kitchen now open until 2 a.m. closing

Drop-ins abound here

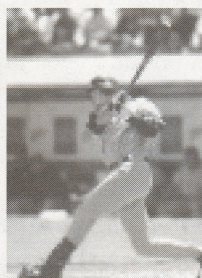
Some of the "Rich & Famous" don't take the spotlight. Many are just customers.

Jim MacDonald remembers when comedian Louie Anderson came into James MacDonald's & Apple Annie's to buy antique art pottery to take to the farm he had just purchased in Ohio.



Howser/Harris

Lynn Radtke (Apple Annie) didn't recognize Neil Patrick Harris's name on his check for a mid-century modern chair but, when he made another purchase at Maryellen Antionelli's Silver Spoon Antiques down the street, she called Lynn and said, "Didn't you know him? That was Doogie Howser!" Harris played the lead role from 1989 to 1993.



Jeter

When she saw the block-long limo pull up in front of Cady's one day, Sin-Der-Ella ran from her chair at Paula's Barbershop to see who it was. Turned out Derek Jeter and a carload of New York Yankees

were stopping for dinner as they followed the UM/Ohio State basketball game and were then on their way to Detroit to catch a Piston's game. She invited them to the Barbershop, but was asleep in her chair by the time the sports heroes arrived.



Grubnic

Sin-Der-Ella gives more attention to Dave Grubnic, however. The famed dragster drives for the Kalitta Team and stops by for haircuts with great regularity. With a Brisbane, Australia address, Grubnic is probably Depot Town's farthest-flung regular

Travelers stayed at the Follett House

Of the famous personalities who have walked these streets, many were simply walking the block-long stretch from the MCRR depot to the Follett House:

"Lindomania" came to Ypsilanti when P.T. Barnum extended Jenny Lind's world tour in 1850. "The Swedish Nightingale," sang "Home Sweet Home" in the Follett House ballroom. Local papers said "there was not a dry eye in the house."

William F. Cody brought his famous Buffalo Bill's Wild West show to that third floor venue in 1900 and we wonder if he actually took horses up those narrow stairs that could not pass code today for such large groups. Since his shows were billed as "half circus and half history lesson," it is suspected it was the history half that was offered up in that space. Cody had his private rail car photographed in front of the outrageous gardens at the MCRR depot.

Cody came for personal business as well: to see relatives who lived on Textile Road (just west of State Street and south of Ann Arbor airport). That house is now scheduled for demolition by developers.

And, of course, who can forget the Swedish Bell Ringers and other popular entertainments of the day? Many of the house statistics can still be seen penciled on the wall by the ticket booth in a space that is used only for storage today.

Anyone doubting differences between early safety codes and today's need only imagine the logistics of Ypsilanti High School's first basketball games played in that same space. Either the court standards have changed, or they played half-court games up there.



The Follett House was billed as "the most elegant hotel between Detroit and Chicago"



Jenny Lind



Above: The Cody farm on W. Textile Road in February 2007



Right: William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody

**It's our heritage:
The "welcome mat"
has been put out for
travelers here for
168 years**



734-476-3366

Candace B. Pinaud
22 East Cross Street
cpinaud@lenderltd.com

**Quinn's
Essentials**

19 E. Cross Street
734.544.4690

Home Decor, Unique Gifts, Jewelry, Clothing
TempurPedic™ Mattresses
Pandora Jewelry & Trollbeads



ENCHANTED FLORIST, inc.

46 E. Cross St. • Ypsilanti, MI 48198

(734) 547-9230

"Service with a personal touch."

Specializing in all of your personal & corporate needs



\$5 off
an in-store purchase
of \$19.95 or more

free local delivery
on arrangements of \$29.95 and up
(a value of \$7.95)

Only one offer can be used at a time. Not valid with any other offer or in-store specials.

www.depottown.org

Aubree's
DEPOT TOWN

• Best Pizza in Town • Projection TV's w/Sounddog
• Daily Happy Hour Specials • The Game is Always on!

39 E. Cross Street • 483-1873

Home Makeover Specialists!

Looking for the latest in window fashions & floor coverings? It's easy to find the perfect color & style when you have an expert visit your home with Michigan's Largest Mobile Selection—And it's FREE!

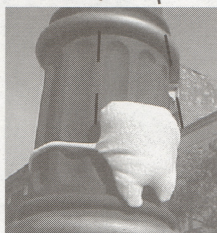
Since 1952

**Esquire
INTERIORS**

734-663-7011 • www.EsquireInteriors.com



Depot Town Rag, July 2007 3



Detail of the Tooth on the town clock shaft, 7 June 2007

Is *non sequitur* art a bid for fame?

"Let the tooth be known," said Sandee French as she pointed out the stuffed cloth tooth hanging on the shaft of the town clock in the middle of East Cross Street in early June.

"It's been appearing in several places around the town," she observed. "We ought to investigate this with the highest journalistic standards. Let's call someone from out of town."

The Tooth seems to fit the mode of this district's famed "Smeeth Frog" and "Tridge Troll" whose short legends gained popularity in the last two decades. A tradition of whimsical sight gags continues here with welcome regularity.

This summer's "Tooth" resembles a child's soft crib toy. Some said it looks like a carefully plucked and blanched squab carcass. The 9"h x 6"w cuddle toy has all the loveable quality of Pinky Winky, the Teletubbie who made the news when Rev. Jerry Falwell said he must be gay because he carried a purse.

Daniel Cox, DDS, hopes the appearances of The Tooth "will remind us to floss more often" and, if anyone wants to bring it in for a check-up, he would be happy to give them an estimate for any work that needs to be done.

Visual pun, sight gag, or blatant hoax, The Tooth brings a bit bit of whimsy and plenty of opportunity for passers-by to exercise their penchant for word-play. One wag has noted how such neighborhood mind games are not harmful. "They get people thinking," he says. He calls it a "non-detrimental sentimental dental-mental."

All that jazz brought big names to the block

DTA and WEMU brought some of the best jazz musicians in the country to the events in the Freighthouse, Frog Island Jazz Festival, and the Heritage Jazz Fests from 1970-1990

A.C. Reed
& The Sparkplugs
Ambassadors
Anderson Reed
Dondero Trio
Big Dave and
The Ultrasonics
Bird of Paradise
Orchestra
Buckwheat Zydeco
Bukman Experience
Charles Boles Quintet
Chicago
Blues Review
Chicago Blues
Special
w/ Albert King
David Flipppo
Domino
Eastside Blues
Fats Dynamite

Gerald Ross
Howling Diablos
II-V-I Orchestra
J.D. Heard Orcehstra
Jay Caldwell
& the Gospel
Ambassadors
Jimmy Wilkins
Orchestra
Joe Loduca Cuo
Juanita McCray,
Zoom,
Thornetta Davis
Kamau Kenyatta
Quintet
Katalenic Kwek Band
Ken Cox and the
Guerilla Jam Band
Kenn Thomas Duo
Kenny Garrett
Little Sonny
Blues Band

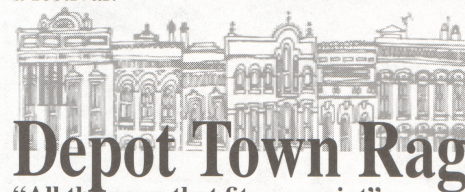
Lunar Glee Club
Motor City Blues
Queens
Mr. B (Mark Braun)
New Birth Brass
Marching Band
New Breed Bebop
Percy Gabriel's New
Orleans Jazz Band
Randy Napoleon
Quintet
Rayse Biggs Quartet
Rodney Whittaker
Octet
Russell Green
& Jerry Neely
Sean Dobbins
Quartet
Steve Sommers
& Lady Sunshine

Straight Ahead
Sugar Blue
Sunnyland Slim Blues
Band
Terrence Siminen
& the
Mallet Playboys
The Blues Desciples
The Hot Club
Tom Saunders and
the Surfside Six
Trinidad/ Tripoli Steel
Band
Uncalled Four
Vibration Society
Wayne Toups
& Zydeca June



In the next *Rag* **We Can Do It!**

We examine all things historical for our annual YesterFest Carnival of history both real and imagined. Relax; it's only a festival.



Depot Town Rag

"All the news that fits, we print"

A monthly publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 970235

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

To the editor:

thomasdodd@comcast.net

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

a nonprofit 501(c)(3)

Community Development Corporation

Gary McKeever, President

Mary Decker, Vice President

Ray Strassel, Treasurer

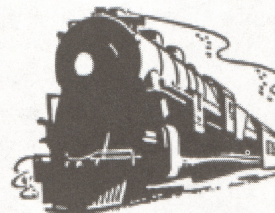
Sandee French,

Secretary & Past President

Website: www.depottown.org

DTA meets at 6:30 p.m on the third Wednesday of each month at Café Luwak, 42 East Cross Street.

The Great Train Race



8:10 a.m., Sunday, 19 August during Heritage Festival

A 10K TAC certified classic foot race.

Plus a 5K run/walk.

Race Hotline 734-332-9139

Online entries at:

www.ypsilantijaycees.com/TheGreatTrainRace

CAFE LUWAK

42 E. Cross Street
734-482-8050
FAX: 734-482-FOOD
Info@cafeluwak.com
www.cafeluwak.com

Ice Cream
Deli Sandwiches
Coffee Drinks

- Deli Sandwiches on Fresh Baked Bread
- Homemade Soups and Sides
- Espresso & Coffee Drinks
- Stroh's Premium Ice Cream

Call or visit our web site for information on our catering services

Cadys
GRILL & BAR

A New Dining Experience!

new menu • superb collection of wines

36 E. Cross Street • 483-2800

10% off your entire meal

HARRINGTON'S

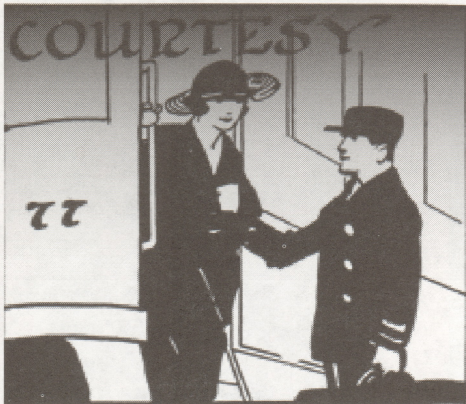
STANDARD PRINTING

In historic Depot Town
John & Pattie Harrington

120 East Cross Street 734.483.0339
Ypsilanti, MI 48198 Fax 734.483.3130
email: info@ypsistandard.com

Depot Town Rag, July 2007 4

Arrivals at the depot brought out the best of the best



Meeting people at the depot brought out the best in everyone. Arrivals could be world-famous celebrities or your Aunt Ethel from Detroit; it didn't matter. Hugs and kisses and squeals of joy were common as we waved to them from the platform.

Lots of laughs here



Comedian Phyllis Diller didn't come to Ypsi by train. She moved north with the work force in World War II so her husband could work at the Willow Run Bomber Plant.

Diller lived on Oakwood and developed some of her early night club act around "Fang," her husband at the time. She sang in the choir at First Presbyterian and locals tell of her routines at a local laundromat.

She was "discovered" when she appeared as a contestant on Groucho Marx's "You Bet Your Life" television show.

Maybe Jake fit in too well

When Paula Filek moved her barbershop to Depot Town from Ann Arbor, she said she would miss her regular breakfast friend, Shakey Jake, the popular street entertainer. Jake traveled to distant Depot Town to check out her new shop soon after she moved here. He didn't stay, though. Jake fit in so well down in Depot Town that nobody noticed him. He may have figured the busker business would see higher profits in a more conforming community.



483-6300

Paula's

barber Shop

40 East Cross Street

Everybody famous came by train in our early days—some with their own private railroad cars

Prince Hohenloe of Germany held up the train for a short layover on his 1905 honeymoon tour when he realized this town was named for his bride, Princess Ypsilantis of Greece. He thought the floral bouquets handed out by the Swain sisters were made especially for his bride, not knowing it was the sisters' custom to treat everyone like royalty when they passed through.

Sarah Bernhardt made international news when her train got stuck in the snow on Christmas Eve during her American tour. Her cast and crew were traveling from Ann Arbor to Toledo on the A²RR and got stuck in a huge snow drift at Urania, later the site of the Ypsilanti State Hospital.

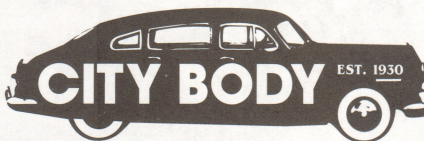
The Ypsilanti Greek Theatre brought attention to Our Town in 1966-7 with an enthusiastic review in Time magazine. Actor Burt Lahr staged a photo-op in Aubree's parking lot when he arrived for his show. Dame Judith Anderson and Ruby Dee also staged press conferences here when they came for their performances in Aeschylus's *The Oresteia* and Artisanophanes' *The Birds*.

Local roofers win fame, too



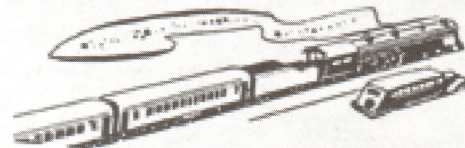
Eric Fowler, of Radford Roofing, finishes up his DTA Caboose work while the rest of the crew works on the roof of the Firehouse Museum a block away. Famous throughout the area, Radford Roofing specializes in restoration and rehabilitation of historic properties. Last summer's project won the Pittsfield Historical Society the Michigan Barn of the Year Award for their Sutherland/Wilson Farm Museum on Textile Road west of State Street.

Baked-on Automotive Finishes • Complete Collision Repair

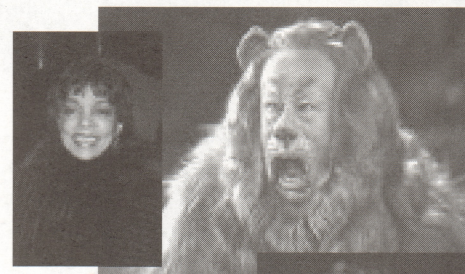


CITY BODY EST. 1930

20 E. Cross St. • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
734.482.4737 • 482.9353 • FAX: 482-0181
SCOTT SOBBRY BRUCE SOBBRY



Right:
Famed actress
Sarah Bernhardt
spent a lonely
Christmas Eve
snowbound on the
railroad tracks
near here



The 1966-7
Ypsilanti Greek
Theatre brought such
stars as (above and
right) Ruby Dee,
Burt Lahr (shown in
his *Cowardly Lion*
role in *The Wizard of
Oz*), and Dame Judith
Anderson



World of Rocks®

Crystals, Minerals, Fossils and Beads
Custom Beadwork • Handwrapped Specialties • Findings • Classes
734-481-9981

www.worldofrocks.com I-94, Exit 183
42 N. Huron
Just south of Depot Town

*The Queen's
Residence*

BED & BREAKFAST

Marla & Joe Queen
Innkeepers

INNKEEPER@QUEENSRESIDENCE.COM 734.340.2805
WWW.QUEENSRESIDENCE.COM 220 S. HURON ST.



**Ypsi
Images**
at the
**Nelson Amos
Studio**

Original Paintings,
Prints, Calendars,
and more at
9 E. Cross Street
734-484-2787

www.nelsonamosstudio.com

Depot Town Rag, July 2007 5

Everybody gets their 15 minutes

In Modern Times, everyone expects to live up to Andy Warhol's dictum of being famous for fifteen minutes. Some will even settle for appearing in a television commercial. Many have realized that dream in Depot Town.



A GM ad agency made one of their "Hometown America" commercials in Ike's Barbershop. Techies wired fake autumn leaves into the barren trees to

add color to the scene. The short spot was filmed in the early hours before dawn and lighted by giant floodlights. Barber Ike Rednour did what he always did—he cut hair at his chair by the window—and the whole world saw him on television.

Miller Motor Sales has been featured several times in commercials seeking an authentic background of mid-American life. That unique Hudson dealership has now evolved into a museum of automobiliana for folks who are not content to wait for occasional commercial background shots.



The rest of Depot Town got on television too—if only in a cable commercial we had to pay for. In the 1970s, DTA popped for a Cable TV commercial

showing flickering images of antique shoppers, vintage Hudsons, strudel-making at the Freighthouse, and the Association's logo.



the QUEEN OF HEARTS
Pastries & Bakery, Inc.
(734) 487-9223
32 E. Cross St.
www.queenofheartspastries.com

9am-7pm
Tuesday thru Saturday
Closed
Sunday & Monday



**Katherine Gordon
Shannon Gordon
owners**

**Toys & Treats
for Kids and
Kids-at-Heart**

23 E. Cross Street
734.482.1830
Fax 734.482.1831

RAGTIME Coming events

Every Thursday evening through
13 September
Depot Town Cruise Nights

Tuesday nights
Motorcycle Expo
all summer long

29 June- 1 July
Michigan Camaro Fest

13-14 July
Michigan Elvisfest
Sanctioned by Graceland
Viva Las Vegas Tent
Friday: Blue Hawaii Night
Saturday: Candlelight Vigil,
Gospel Hour, Classic Car Show,
Children's Fun Area
Special Guest Appearance
by Martha Reeves

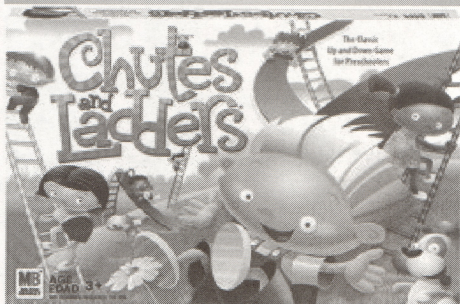
27, 28 July
Michigan Brewers' Festival

11-17 August
United Association
*of Plumbers, Pipefitters, Steamfitters,
Refrigeration Fitters & Sprinkler Fitters*

17, 18, 19 August
29th Ypsilanti
Heritage Festival

25 August
Annual Fire Truck Muster

29 September
FALAPALOOZA
Family Festival
Giant Chutes & Ladders, Live Music



Locals well known, too

That's Ma Bush hanging out her third floor bordello window at 52 E. Cross Street as the Ypsilanti Cornet Band had their picture taken in 1870. Some of the 31 people in the photo may have been among the names written on the wall by the telephone inside Ma's "New York Gallery" of fancy ladies.

Now the home of BirdBrain's international offices, the walls have been painted over and nervous descendants of local pillars of the community can relax. Only the names of the band members actually sitting in the wagon are known today and there is no evidence they ever got off the wagon to enter Ma's establishment. They were probably just resting up between concerts.

CORNER BREWERY

Café • TV Lounge • Beergarden

Beer • Wine • Sandwiches • Snacks

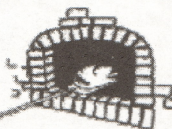
720 Norris - Forest between Huron & River

480-BREW • cornerbrewery.com

Ypsilanti Food Co-Op and the River Street Bakery

312 North River
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
734-483-1520

Fresh Bread in the tradition of hearth baked artisan breads available Monday Wednesday and Friday evenings



On the World Wide Web:
www.depottown.org

SILVER & GOLD COINS



Old Towne Coin & Gold
Certified Member ANA/JA/PNG/MRA/N.F.I.B.

In historic Depot Town for 25 years
24 E. Cross Street **734.483.6155**

FAX: 734.485.8300